

THE
GOSPEL MAGAZINE

Incorporating The Protestant Beacon and The British Protestant

"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TODAY, AND FOR EVER."
"ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND
OF PEACE."

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE, SAITH YOUR GOD."

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EDITORIAL

It was a deeply moving experience to read the May issue of the *Evangelical Times*, whose coverage of the persecuted believers in the Soviet Union has not only reached the Christian public but has been echoed in the national Press and in the B.B.C.

Here were the letters and stories from the fires of persecution. Here too were the photographs of men and women—yes, and of children too—for families have suffered terribly as these Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches have faced the full fury of atheistic hate and repression.

Here is a living and suffering testimony in face of ecumenical compromise. The visiting ecclesiastics who visit the Soviet Union are welcomed. The World Council of Churches, so ready to attack U.S.A. or South Africa, has always been noticeably soft on the Communists. Against this compromising involvement and the consequent indifference to the sufferings of believers the protest rings out with passionate indignation.

What a tribute the record of these Evangelical Baptists pays to the sovereign power of our God. With hundreds imprisoned, tortured, killed, with parents punished for teaching their own children about Christ, they still flourish and grow.

What I found especially encouraging was the page of photographs of young believers, largely in their twenties or early thirties, all of them either serving or having served prison sentences. Here is a land which for over fifty years has had the most intense atheistic indoctrination. Here is an educational system where the very basis is denial of God. Yet from

those schools have come young Christians ready to suffer for Christ's sake.

But what a rebuke it is to our own spiritual sloth. How little we know of suffering. We do not have our churches and chapels closed. We do not have our goods destroyed or our homes confiscated. We do not see our children taken from us. Yet how easily we lapse into an easy-going complacency. The challenge of the suffering Baptists of the Soviet Union is that 'it is high time to awake out of sleep'.

The greatest need of all is that we should pray for them. They are not remote from us. They are our brothers and sisters in Christ. God forbid that we should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for them.

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He Must Reign

H. M. CARSON

*A sermon preached in Hamilton Road
Baptist Church, Bangor, Co. Down.*

'For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our lowly body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself' (Philippians 3 : 20, 21).

We will concentrate our attention particularly on the latter part of the twenty-first verse, 'according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself'.

Paul has been speaking about the Christian's hope, the hope of the resurrection of the body. He is not speaking about a bare immortality of the soul; he is not speaking about some shadowy survival. He is speaking about this rich, deeply rich, hope which the Christian has that he shall be raised and, in a glorified body, he shall be in Christ's presence. But Paul says that this hope of the Christian lies within the context of an even greater work which the Lord Jesus Christ will do. The resurrection of the body—amazing miracle that it is—is simply one manifestation of a far wider work. Paul takes the same line, you may remember, when he is writing to the Corinthians. That great statement of the resurrection which comes in 1 Corinthians 15 sets the resurrection in the context of the great and final work of God, the final flowering of all the purposes of God. The God who raises His people from the dead and glorifies them, is the God who at that point finally consummates all His purposes.

When a man is, by the working of the Spirit of God, brought to the new birth, when he is born again, when he becomes a new person, there is a great miracle wrought out in his life, but he is still in this world. He is still in a world with many temptations and many difficulties; he is still in a world where he faces a great deal of enmity if he stands consistently for the Lord Jesus Christ. But he has the hope, and what a sure hope it is, that 'He who has begun a good work in him will perform that work, will perfect it, until the day of Jesus Christ'. And the Christian, aware as he is of so much imperfection in his life, has this great assurance, this deep conviction, that one day he will be in God's presence and he will be perfect. But God does not simply deal in this individual fashion with the

Christian; He deals with the Christian and with the environment in which the Christian lives. In this world, the environment is hostile. The Christian is in a situation where he is involved in conflict. He has to fight for his spiritual life; he has to defend his gospel against the attacks of those who have no time for his message. But the God who perfects the work of regeneration when He raises us to glory, is the God who also transforms our environment. That is why the New Testament speaks not only of the resurrection of the believer, but of a 'new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness'.

Now Paul is speaking in these terms here. He is setting the resurrection of the body in this wider context. It is one manifestation, a glorious manifestation certainly—but only one manifestation of the wider work which God purposes to do at the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. So Paul says, 'He shall change our lowly body that it might be made like unto Christ's glorious body in accordance with the working whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself'. Paul roots our conviction, our assurance, of the resurrection of the body, in the mighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is on that mighty power of Christ that I want to dwell this morning.

His is a power which is inherent. It is essentially His; 'He is able,' says Paul, 'able to subdue all things unto Himself'. The word in the original which he uses here is one which comes in our English term 'dynamite', and when we speak of dynamite we are speaking of power—power unloosed, power that moves things. Well, says Paul, 'This Christian has dynamite, He has this tremendous power'. But of course we have learnt in the past few years how the power of dynamite has been completely eclipsed. Some of those tremendous explosions which rocked cities during the bombing of the second world war became a very minor affair when they dropped the first atom bomb, and when they dropped the hydrogen bomb, even the atom bomb began to fade somewhat. But the 'dynamite', the power of Christ is something so far beyond any display of human or earthly power as to make it all recede into utter insignificance. All power is His. This is the sovereign Christ, the Christ who exercises dominion and will reign supremely for ever and ever. He is able—this is the basic affirmation of faith of the Christian, this is the affirmation which sustains him in every situation, in every adverse circumstance. Christ is able. All power belongs to our Saviour.

But this is not a power which is locked up; it is a power which is constantly expressing itself, and so Paul uses another

word here. It is 'according to the working by which He is able to subdue all things unto Himself'. And the word that he uses for 'working' is a word that appears in our English as 'energy'—energy, so characteristic of small children, so characteristic of growing boys. Energy is activity, action showing itself. Christ, says Paul, has this inner dynamite, this power, these amazing resources of power, and He has energy. His power is constantly expressing itself in various directions. It expressed itself in the work of creation. The Bible sees the Father taking the initiative in the work of creation but the Lord Jesus Christ plays a key role. He was the agent through whom the very universe came into being. 'In the beginning was the Word,' says John; 'the Word was with God, the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made'. When you go back to Genesis 1 and when you read the constantly repeated phrase 'And God said', you are not simply having a metaphorical description—this is reality. The Word by which God created was the second Person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ. And Paul goes further when he writes to the Colossians and declares that this universe is sustained by this same Lord Jesus Christ. In Him all things consist. All things are sustained, directed and controlled by the One who took flesh and became Man, whom men knew as Jesus of Nazareth, but whom we know to be not only man but the Son of the living God.

But His activity in creation and providence is seen for us supremely in the work of redemption, and redemption certainly involved activity. He came from heaven and took our nature upon Him. He moved amongst men and in great power He showed His might, He demonstrated to men by the miracles which He wrought who He really was. Another rabbi? Another prophet? No, they came to see that he was someone far transcending anyone who had ever come before Him. These miracles were signs, each one of them pointing clearly to the fact that the One who wrought such mighty deeds was none other than God the Son. His death—was this activity? Was this energy? Was this not passivity? Was this not defeat? No, again it is Christ acting. 'I lay down my life,' He said; 'I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again.' When He died on the Cross it was not in terms of an expiring groan. No! 'Into Thy hands I commit my spirit.' Even in the moments of death He is active, the power of Christ is manifest. But how much more was it manifest on that first Lord's Day when the stone was rolled back from the tomb. 'I have power to lay it down, I have power to take it

again'—well, His statement was no empty boast, it was a claim that was vindicated by the event. The empty tomb was the great demonstration of the dynamite, and the energy, the power and the outworking of that power. Christ, the crucified, buried? No! He is the risen, the living, the almighty Son of God.

And faith looks into the future and says there is still more. That power which raised Him from the dead, that power by which He ascended into heaven, that power which has conferred upon Him authority at God's right hand, is a power which will be supremely manifested at the end of the age when this Christ shall come again in power and great glory to take His people to be with Himself. All power belongs to our Saviour.

But our trouble and our failure are that as Christians very often our thinking about the power of Christ tends to be so circumscribed. What I mean is this. When we speak about the power of Christ we tend very often to think about the way He works in *our* lives. We think of the power which we experienced when He made us new creatures, when He brought us from death unto life; or we think about the power we experience in times of temptation and the ways in which He delivers us. Or we may think of the way in which we have had some special manifestation of His power in His control of our circumstances, His providential ordering of our lives, that He has brought us through great difficulties. But the trouble is that we are always thinking of His power in relation to us. Now obviously it is right that we should thus reflect on Christ's power in our lives. But if we only think in these terms we will fail to grasp the wonder of the power of Christ, and as a result we shall impoverish our own spiritual experience, because having failed to grasp the greatness of His power in the wider realm, we will not really understand the meaning of the power which is to be ours in our own Christian lives. There is a width in Scripture as it deals with the power of Christ. Christ's power in the life of the believer is simply one aspect of a far wider exercise of power.

His power is seen in every realm. It is seen in the world of nature and I have already touched on that. This universe has come into being through the power of Christ. Go out on a summer evening, go out on one of those evenings when there are no clouds in the sky and the stars are sparkling, and you get a wonderful sense of the immensity of space. When you talk to someone who knows a great deal more about astronomy than you do, well, your understanding is enlarged correspond-

ingly and you sense the vastness of it all. If you go to London and visit the planetarium, they take you on a tour of the heavens and you realise the immense vastness of this universe in which we live. And all this is subject to our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember in the Psalms how the psalmist looks out on nature. He sees all the manifestations of the power of nature, the thunder roaring and the lightning flashing, the storm and the tempest, and he speaks of it in terms of the power of God. 'He makes the wind His chariot.' He is in control, in control of all the mighty forces of the universe. All are subject to Christ.

And the world of men is likewise subject to Him. I fear at this point Christians so often become so locked up in themselves and they so retreat from the world in which they live that they tend to forget that the world is subject to Christ. This is not a world over which Christ has failed to exercise His power. Christ exercises His power in mercy or in judgment. Men are either under the grace of Christ or they are under the condemnation of Christ. But Christ is not an absentee. He is not some remote spectator looking on at a world which is gradually getting out of control. Christ is the King, He is the Lord of men, and men are still subject to Him, and answerable to Him. They may attempt to go their own way; they may have their brief moment of imagined independence; they may think they have thrown off the shackles of God; they may believe they are asserting their independence; but the Bible constantly comes back with the reminder that men are still subject to Christ. Christ is on the throne. He holds the sceptre of the universe, and men, whether they acknowledge it or no, whether at this time they are prepared to see it or not, they are subject to Him, and one day they will be compelled to acknowledge Him.

But there is another realm, a realm about which the Bible speaks a great deal, about which we tend to think rather little, a realm in which Christ's sovereignty is manifest, and that is the world of spiritual agencies. We live in this world, a world of earth and sea and sky, a world of concrete and bricks and machines, and everything is very real and tangible—you can see it, you can touch it. But as far as the Scriptures are concerned there is an unseen world; unseen, intangible, beyond our physical senses, but none the less real. It is a world of spiritual agencies and in Scripture it is a very real world. Men may not see these agencies with their eyes, they may not be able to hear them speak or watch them in action, but none the less this invisible world is a reality. There are times in the

Bible when for a moment the curtain is drawn aside and you are able to look beyond the present material realm into that hidden world. Some of the instances in the Old Testament give you such a glimpse of that world beyond. Remember Elisha when he was trapped, or apparently trapped, in the city with the Syrian army around him. Elisha's servant felt that the end had come, for there seemed to be no possibility of escape. It was then that Elisha prayed, 'Lord, open the young man's eyes'. God opened his eyes and he could see, not simply all the Syrian forces all around the city of Dothan, he could see the chariots of God, the angelic hosts which were there as an army of defence sent by God to preserve His servant.

There was a day when Isaiah went into the temple, the temple where people so often went, where they saw the priests and the sacrifices being performed. But that day with the eye of faith Isaiah saw something more—he saw God Himself; His train filled the temple. Isaiah saw the seraphim, the angelic beings before the throne and they are crying 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts'. It was a vision of this unseen world, this world of angelic beings. The shepherds saw it out on the Judean hills that wonderful night when the Lord came to earth. Their eyes were opened, their ears were unstopped, they heard the music of heaven; they heard the angels singing, 'Glory to God in the highest and in earth peace, goodwill towards men. Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord'. It was a voice coming from the other world, a reminder that the world of shepherds and Roman occupying forces, the world of everyday life was not the only world, nor indeed even the ultimate world, but this hidden invisible world is very much a reality. And the Bible constantly reminds us that this invisible world is subject to Christ. Read the first chapter of Hebrews; Christ is being set forth as the Lord of all and He is set forth as the Lord of the angelic powers. These angels—who are they? 'They are simply ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation.' Powerful, glorious, but subject to Christ. He is the One who reigns supreme over them.

But when you look beyond this veil of sense, when you move outside this realm of space and time, you see in Scripture not only angels who are to minister to those who are heirs of salvation, you see also malevolent forces, demonic powers, powers of evil, powers subject to the evil one whose whole aim is to destroy the work of God, whose whole aim is to sidetrack the people of God. Go back to the Old Testament, go back to the Book of Job and in the opening chapter you get this

glimpse of the evil one in the presence of God Almighty seeking to tempt Job. We are reminded that the devil could not go one step beyond the permissive will of God. Job was to go through grim days, he was to suffer serious sickness, he was to lose everything, he was to be beaten down by sorrow and bereavement, his whole world would collapse about him, but all the buffetings and testings that came from the devil were subject to the governing control of God Himself.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was talking to the 'seventy' whom He sent out in His mission, as they came back thrilled about what had happened, He said, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven'. This preaching of the 'seventy' was a declaration of the Good News of the Kingdom, a declaration that the King had come, that His power was being displayed, and Jesus says 'through this preaching I have seen the kingdom of Satan begin to crumble'. It was to crumble further when Christ hung on the Cross and when He rose from the dead, and it will crumble finally at His coming again, when He comes to reign supreme.

And this is what Paul is talking about; he is moving you towards the climax—indeed, the Scriptures constantly move you towards this climax, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is this not why so many of the churches have gone sadly astray in these days? Many of them do not believe any longer that Jesus Christ is coming again. Talk to some of them of the second coming and they start talking in the jargon of theologians, they talk about 'realised eschatology', they talk about this and that, and I would say that the jargon of theologians often simply covers their own doubts, their own lack of conviction. But the New Testament rings with this assurance 'this same Jesus shall so come in like manner as the disciples saw Him go'. Is life simply a meaningless jumble, is history simply going to go on and on, or is it to end in an atomic holocaust? No, says the Scripture, history is under the control of God Almighty, the whole unfolding is subject to His sovereignty and the climax of it all is the coming again of Jesus Christ. He will come in power. Power has been the keynote of all He has ever done and power will be the keynote of the final revelation of His might.

He will come to men, men who have ignored and rejected Him. He will come to those who have snapped their fingers in the face of the Almighty, who have imagined they can plan their own lives. How will He come to them? Paul writes to the Thessalonians and speaks of that day when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on

them that know not God and on them that believe not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the early Christians produced a creed, a short statement of faith, a creed known as the 'Apostles' Creed', they spoke of the One who should come to judge the living and the dead. When He came to Bethlehem and when He began His ministry, it was all in terms of mercy; He preached a Kingdom to which men might come in repentance and faith; He spoke of forgiveness and a new life. But when He comes again it will not be to announce a time of further probation, it will not be to declare that there will be new opportunities for those who have spurned the gospel, it will be to declare the day of judgment, the final condemnation of those who have lived for themselves and have imagined that they could leave God out of their reckoning.

Christ the all-powerful One will come to judge the living and the dead. And remember in the Book of the Revelation there is this vivid picture of the great men of the earth, the princes and rulers, the people who imagined they had the power, calling on the mountains and the rocks to fall on them to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the Throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. Christ is returning in sovereign power. He comes to deal with this invisible world. He comes to deal with the hosts of hell. When John wrote his epistle he said, 'The whole world lieth in the evil one'. John looked out on a world in which there was so much evidence of the devil's activity. The first century was no different from the twentieth century. There was the same selfishness, the same lust, the same exploitation of man by man; there were wars, bloodshed, murder, thieving, adultery—all this sorry catalogue that brings so much misery into human life, and as John looks at it he says, 'We know that the whole world lies in the evil one'.

But this is not the final story. If this were the final story, well, what a miserable indictment of men it would be and what a final statement of the utter misery of human history. But no, the Bible speaks of the final triumph when the evil one who has wrought such havoc amongst men shall finally be subdued and all these demonic forces, these evil spirits, shall be subject to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is simply a recollection of that first promise in Eden, in a moment of disobedience when Adam and Eve come under the judgment of God they also come under the promise of God, who speaks of 'the One born of a woman who shall bruise the serpent's head'. And that promise of Eden, still in the minds of the people of God right down the centuries, will find its fulfilment in that day

when He shall indeed crush Satan under His feet. Or to turn to the vivid language of the Book of Revelation where it speaks of the devil being cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and false prophet are—Christ reigns supreme.

But what about the angels, what about the redeemed? The answer is that Christ will reign supreme over His people. He comes in judgment and in vengeance, to manifest the wrath of God, but He comes in a final blaze of mercy for those who have bowed the knee and submitted to Him as their Saviour. He comes to the saved, to the redeemed, as their returning Lord. So I turn you again to the Book of the Revelation and there you get this glorious vision which was given to John on Patmos, and what a vision it must have been to him. There he was in a Roman penal settlement, under sentence because of his testimony and his preaching, exiled from the church, exiled from Christian friends, and in that desperate situation he sees the heaven opened and he has this vision of Christ upon the throne. Gathered around the throne are those who worship the Lord; the four and twenty elders, speaking symbolically of the church of the Old Testament and the church of the New Testament, the twelve tribes, the twelve apostles. The twenty-four elders gather together the two churches and they are before the throne worshipping the Lord. The angels are there and they are adoring the Lamb. The redeemed, those who have come from every tribe and nation and language and who have washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb, day and night they are in His temple serving Him. What is their theme? 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing.' So it rises to a great crescendo, 'Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever'. The Book of the Revelation simply gathers up the theme which has run right through Scripture; our God is upon the throne, our Christ reigns. He is able; all things are in His hands and subject to His control. 'Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou, that every knee to Thee should bow.' This sovereign Christ, this One before whom one day the nations must stand in judgment, this One is our Lord Jesus. He is no remote being, He is the One who bears the marks of nails and spear and thorns. He is the One who was crucified for us at Calvary. This is our risen Lord, this is our exalted King, this is our coming God.

This is why the Christian looks forward with confidence, because of course Paul is speaking in very practical terms here. He is not engaged in a theoretical dissertation on the Second

Coming. This is not merely a topic for debate so that this one who has his prophetic theory and this one who has his mode of interpretation may engage in an interesting tête-à-tête on the subject. This is all very practical. Paul is speaking to Christians who are living in a pagan society, facing difficulty, facing opposition and facing also the responsibility of living for Christ, and it is to this situation that he is addressing himself. When he speaks about the coming of Christ it is not in order to lull them into some condition of complacency, rather it is to stir them. Look, he says, we are waiting for the coming of the King, we need to be about the King's business. He is coming back to finalise and consummate all His purposes—well, we need to be found watching and waiting for Him. God forbid that in the day of the King's appearing we should be found slothful and indolent. That is why I fear some of us need to take the truth of the Second Coming far more seriously; if we really believe that Jesus Christ is coming again many of us would have to materially alter the pattern of our living. Are we living for this world, for the things of this world, or are we living for the coming of the King? This is the big division between a spiritually-minded Christian and a carnally-minded Christian, between one who has his ambitions set upon heaven and one who is very much earthbound.

I say it is the great incentive to holy living, but it is also the great encouragement. There are times when Christians are discouraged, times when they may become depressed; the difficulties seem to multiply, the road seems to be so narrow and so uphill, and around them they find so much apathy, so much indifference to the gospel; indeed, they find a great deal of opposition. What does the future hold? We look out into the future and we find that men's hearts are failing them for fear, the clouds seem to be so heavy at times on the horizon. What does the future hold? For men, it holds nothing but war and strife and suffering, apart from this glorious hope. For the Christian, however, it does not simply stretch out into a meaningless future, a future which may end in disaster. It is pointing rather towards this great event, the coming again of Christ. No wonder the New Testament believer can say, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus'. And when He comes, every eye shall see Him, and those who know Him shall bow the knee in adoring worship, and those who know Him not, they too will bow the knee and they will see Him as their Judge.

I ask you this morning—In the day of Christ's appearing, that solemn day, will you rejoice to meet Him? Will you be

continued on page 183

Doctrinal Definitions

PAUL TUCKER

THE ORIGIN OF SATAN

1. THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN.

1. *There are far too many modernists who belittle or deny the personality of Satan.* One refers to him as 'a metaphorical personification of evil'. In other words, when you talk of 'the devil' you really mean 'the principle of evil' but you do not mean a literal evil personality. The answer to this is that everywhere the Bible sets forth Satan as a person. He has the qualities of a personality. He has a very cunning and evil intelligence and can inject thoughts into other minds. He speaks and has a way of communicating his mind to others.

2. *Others refer to the devil as 'the delusion of gullible minds'.* So we are just superstitious people who have not enough intelligence to discard this medieval idea of a personal devil. The answer is that everywhere in Scripture the devil is presented to us as a person and he is mentioned more than all the other angels put together, both good and bad. He is drawn into the human story in Genesis 3 and his career and character and devices are traced right through the entire Scripture until the last book of the Bible and the last chapter, where we find judgment finally passed upon him. He will be cast into the lake of fire. The devil is set forth as a great factor to be reckoned with in the on-going of the history of mankind, of angels, and of the universe itself. We do not base our belief upon medieval ideas, or poetry, or the exaggerated opinions of others; we base our belief on the Word of God. The devil is called that deceiver who deceiveth the whole world, and nowhere is his deception more powerful and successful than in the person whom he has persuaded to believe that he does not exist.

3. *The unconverted give no consideration to the reality of Satan.* People around us who are unsaved just go on living their lives, but they do not give any thought to the devil. I suppose there are multitudes in the world who would not willingly or deliberately enlist under the banner of Satan, yet the Scripture teaches that every man who is unregenerate is to some extent held in his grip and power and is under the sway of the prince of this world. We need to be aware of this because in preaching the Gospel we must fearlessly and honourably tell

people that unless they are converted they are enslaved and held by the god of this world.

4. *Christians everywhere are misinformed as to the devices of the devil.* The Apostle Paul could write 'We are not ignorant of his devices', but I am afraid not every Christian can say that. See 2 Cor. 11 : 3. If we are to be aware of the devices of the great enemy of our souls, then we must to some extent be aware of the kind of creature with whom we have to deal, and the evil emissaries he employs to bring about our spiritual downfall. We know that he has been conquered at the cross, but as one writer has said, though he has been conquered and though he is chained, he is on a very long chain and he has a lot of latitude and is still walking about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

II. THE ORIGIN OF SATAN. Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.

1. *Both these passages in Isaiah and Ezekiel have a local meaning.* In Isaiah we find the prophet prophesying against the king of Babylon (see verse 4 of chapter 14), and in Ezekiel 28 the prophet was taking up a lamentation upon the king of Tyre (see verses 11-12). These prophecies have first of all a local and historical setting. Judgment upon Babylon was predicted by Isaiah; a lamentation against the king of Tyre and his empire was spoken by Ezekiel. But as we look carefully into these passages we find that what is recorded has more than a mere local meaning. There is teaching that goes beyond the mere king of Babylon, beyond the king of Tyre. We can never read the Scriptures merely as history. We can never consider the Scripture merely in terms of historical background. There is again and again a double strand. There is first of all the local setting, the first application, and then there is the deeper and spiritual application. There are statements in these passages in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 which cannot be limited to any local monarch, e.g. Ezekiel 28 : 14. The king of Tyre was never in Eden. The reference is not to the earthly Eden at all, it is a figurative expression of Heaven, the Paradise of God. The king of Tyre had not been in either. Again in verse 15, that could not possibly be true of the king of Tyre because since the fall of man no man has been created perfect. Every man has been born in sin and shapen in iniquity, every man has inherited a fallen human nature. It is obvious that the reference must be to some mighty angelic intelligence.

(a) *He had a perfect character.* There are two references to his creation, see the latter part of verses 13 and 15. Sometimes the question is asked, Why did God create the devil? The simple answer to that is that God did not create the devil. God

created a perfect heavenly intelligence. God created a unique angel who occupied a position of exalted authority in Heaven, who by virtue of his own rebellion turned himself into something other than God created, other than God originally purposed.

(b) *He had perfect wisdom* (see verse 12). The words 'sealest up the sum' mean that here is the acme of perfection; here is a creature who is in every respect wise.

(c) *He had perfect beauty* (see the end of verse 12). We cannot begin to visualise what this angelic being was really like. Even in his fallen state there was something beautiful about his appearance in the Garden of Eden. The word serpent means the shining and dazzling one. We must not imagine that the guise in which the devil appeared to Eve was similar to the crawling reptile we know. Because the devil can transform himself into an angel of light, he has that faculty. It is just a reflection of what he originally was, full of beauty.

(d) *He had perfect adornment* (see verse 13). It is very significant to note that there are just three places in the Scripture where these precious stones are referred to. See Exodus 28—in the breastplate of Aaron, and Revelation 21—in the foundation of the New Jerusalem.

(e) *He had perfect environment*. There is this reference to Eden (see verse 13). In Revelation 2 : 7, Eden (which means a Garden of Paradise) is referred to as being in Heaven. The earthly Eden was but a reflection of something of the glory of Heaven. It is mentioned again in verse 14, 'The holy mountain of God', and in Isaiah 2 : 3 and 11 : 9 the holy mountain of God is the seat of authority, the place where God reigns. Here was this anointed cherub enjoying this perfect paradise of delight in the very mount of God, in the presence of God's authority and majesty, having access to the very throne of God.

(f) *He had a perfect occupation*. He is referred to as 'the anointed cherub that covereth', verse 14 and at the end of verse 16. In some way this angel was directly associated with the safeguarding and covering and protecting of the very throne of God. He had this exalted position. He was there in the interests of the glorious one and he was there to manifest that glory and protect that glory. Someone may say, 'If God is omnipotent, why does He need that His throne should be safeguarded or protected?' The answer to that is that it is not what God needs, it is what God Himself has required and ordered and arranged, which is revealed to us in His Word which really matters. God so decreed that this anointed

cherub should be in some way responsible for the safeguarding and protecting of the honour of His throne. What a privileged position! Notice the end of verses 14 and 16. This walking up and down among the stones of fire seems to be a reference to the devouring holiness, the flaming majesty of God. And here is a perfect creature, full of beauty and wisdom, perfect in adornment and occupation, perfect in environment. It speaks to us of the relationship to the holiness of God, which was to this point of time unbroken. We sing 'The spirits that surround Thy throne may bear the burning bliss'. And here the highest of all angelic intelligences prior to his fall could walk up and down in the midst of the flaming glory of God, unabashed, unafraid, and unashamed.

(g) *He had perfect joy.* The name of this creature was Lucifer. He was not created Satan, or the devil, he became that, he was created Lucifer. Isaiah 14 : 12—Lucifer means a daystar, a light bearer. 'Son of the morning' means 'morning star'. Probably these names suggest something of the perfect bliss and happiness that Lucifer enjoyed, because there is a reference to creation and the stars in Job 38 : 6. The morning stars singing together; that is a figurative term for the angels and when God created the world and made everything perfect and good, then the angelic host was filled with holy laughter and the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted with joy. And here is the chief of them all, the day star, the morning star, enjoying the perfect bliss and perfect glee, sporting himself in the holiness and the glory, and yet with all the freedom and beauty of Heaven. It is very significant to notice these two titles belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is spoken of as the day star (2 Peter 1 : 19). We are to hold on to this sure word of prophecy until we see the consummation of the age, the arriving of 'The Day Star'. Revelation 22 : 16. We read of 'The Morning Star'. I can think of no greater illustration of this unique and lofty position that the heavenly intelligence enjoyed than this, that prior to his fall, he was privileged to bear the very titles that were given to our Lord Jesus Christ in His incarnation.

(To be continued)

Redemption— Universal or Particular?

R. FELLOWS

The substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ is accepted as basic to Christianity by all evangelical believers. By substitutionary atonement we mean that Jesus Christ on the cross offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin; that He took the place of sinners and was punished in their place, for their sins, so securing forgiveness for all who believe in Him. This is well expressed in such Scriptures as 1 Peter 3 : 18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God". The difficulty arises not in the fact of the atonement but in the purpose of the atonement. To put the matter plainly, for whom did Christ die? John Owen in his book *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* has well expressed the three possibilities. He says, 'God imposed His wrath due unto, and Christ underwent the pains of hell for, either all the sins of all men, or all the sins of some men, or some of the sins of all men'. Of these, the last can be discounted, for it leaves none with a clean record. All would have some sins to account for and therefore none would be saved. We are left with the first two alternatives, that either Christ died for all the sins of all men, or all the sins of some men. The former view is known as universal redemption or universal atonement; the latter is variously termed, limited atonement, definite atonement or particular redemption. For consistency we will use the terms universal redemption and particular redemption. To re-state the doctrines: *Universal redemption*: Christ died for all the sins of all mankind, thus making the salvation of all a possibility. All who believe on Him are actually saved. *Particular redemption*: Christ died for the sins of certain people—the elect, those chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1 : 4), not merely to make possible but to make certain their salvation. These people are brought to actual faith by the sovereign working of the Holy Spirit.

Universal redemption is widely accepted today in evangelical circles. Examples of Scriptures used to support the view are: 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1 : 29); 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world

unto himself' (2 Corinthians 5 : 19); 'Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all' (1 Timothy 2 : 5, 6); 'He (Jesus Christ) is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world' (1 John 2 : 2).

Among other passages which also seem to point to universal redemption are: 'God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth' (1 Timothy 2 : 3, 4); 'The Lord . . . is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance' (2 Peter 3 : 9).

The implications of universal redemption

Let us consider the implications if Christ died for literally every man. Unless everyone is going to be saved, which is clearly not so, then the following must be true:

1. The sins of many (all unbelievers) will be punished twice. Christ has suffered for them, yet they will be eternally punished themselves. Is not this unjust? If I am in debt to another, he has every right to expect payment, but if a friend pays the debt for me, how can my creditor demand payment from me as well?
2. Christ died for many who were already beyond hope, for example, Judas. Would not that be futile?
3. Christ died for many who can never be saved, for they are not elect. We read that 'no man can come to me (Christ), except the Father draw him' (John 6 : 44).

These considerations should cause us to seriously question the logic of the doctrine of universal redemption. We shall endeavour to show that not only is this doctrine illogical but it is also unscriptural. We believe that the only view of the atonement which is in harmony with Scripture, logic and the sovereign character of God is that Christ died for the elect and for these alone.

The design for atonement

To better understand what exactly Christ accomplished in His death, we must consider what was the design or purpose of His offering Himself as a sacrifice for sin; then we must proceed to see whether Christ actually accomplished what He intended.

Why did Christ take upon Him human flesh and enter this sin-cursed world? Jesus Himself said, 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost' (Luke 19 : 10). The apostle Paul wrote, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' (1 Timothy 1 : 15). Which sinners did Christ come to save? Of course, some do not believe that Christ's death had any definite design or purpose at all. They say that

Christ died to give everyone the chance of salvation, but that He had no one particularly in mind. But did not Christ say, 'The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep' (John 10 : 11)? He had a specific object in His death—the sheep, not the goats. Did He not say to His Father, 'I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me' (John 17 : 9)? If He purposed to die as much for the world as for those that the Father had given to Him, He would have prayed equally for all.

Understand then that Christ's atonement had a clearly defined object. Which sinners then did He come to save? The angel announced to Joseph before Jesus' birth, 'He shall save his people from their sins' (Matthew 1 : 21). Again we read, 'Christ . . . loved the Church, and gave himself for it' (Ephesians 5 : 25). His object then was clear—His people: the Church.

In reply, someone may say, 'What about John 3 : 17, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved"?' We will discuss the difficulties raised by such passages later; but for now we urge the reader to seriously consider this line of reasoning. Did God intend to save the whole world? God's foreknowledge in itself is enough to dispel such an idea. Certainly God knows everything. He knows who will be saved; He knows that not everyone will be saved, for, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell' (Psalm 9 : 17). It is therefore impossible that God intended to save everyone when He knew that not everyone would be saved.

Having dwelt on the design of the atonement, let us consider what Christ actually accomplished in His death. Writing prophetically of Christ, Isaiah states, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied' (Isaiah 53 : 11). If Christ died for literally everyone He certainly could not derive much satisfaction, for evidently many are not saved. Earlier in the same chapter we read, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all' (Isaiah 53 : 5, 6). We must see the unity of the whole passage. The 'we', 'us' and 'our' all refer to the same people. Those for whose transgressions Christ was wounded, those whose sins were laid on Him, are the ones who are healed with His stripes. In other words, those whose sins Christ bore are

those who experience spiritual healing. All for whom Christ died will be saved.

One more passage will suffice. In Hebrews 9 : 12 we read of Christ that, 'by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us'. The redemption is not made possible but obtained—obtained for those for whom it was intended.

So the Scriptures teach that God purposed to save, and Christ died to save, and did actually redeem, not everyone or anyone indiscriminately, but a people 'chosen in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world' (Ephesians 1 : 4). Of course, to complete the plan of salvation, the Holy Spirit's work is involved. He quickens the elect, and by the Gospel brings each one to an actual possession of this salvation: but this is beyond the scope of our present study.

Let us now examine *three aspects of the atonement*.

1. SUBSTITUTION.

Substitution is the very heart of the atonement. A substitute is one who takes the place of another. At Calvary, the Lord Jesus Christ became a substitute for sinners. Their sins were reckoned to Him. The punishment for their sins was inflicted upon Him. God's wrath against their law-breaking was poured out upon Him. God 'made him (Christ) to be sin for us' (2 Corinthians 5 : 21). 'He was wounded for our transgressions' (Isaiah 53 : 5).

For whom then was Christ a substitute? For Judas? Then Judas has nothing to fear at the judgment: his sins are fully paid for. *Objection:* Those arguing for universal redemption will usually advance one of two objections, both of which really amount to the same thing.

- (a) Some say that Christ died for the sins of such as Judas, but they do not believe it and cannot be saved without faith.

We answer, is not unbelief a sin? Then Christ died for that too. Certainly faith is necessary for salvation, but as the means not the ground of it. Faith is the gift of God: 'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God' (Ephesians 2 : 8). All for whom Christ died will be given faith. Those who do not believe are those for whom no specific atonement is provided. They are not His sheep—'Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep' (John 10 : 26). There is not the slightest Scriptural warrant for saying that Christ died for all sins except unbelief.

- (b) Others say that the *sin question* is dealt with for all men, that all men's sins are fully paid for, and it is now the

Son question that is crucial. They say that men will not be judged for their sins but for their response to the Lord Jesus Christ.

To this *we answer*, first that it has no Scriptural support, and second that the judgment is everywhere portrayed as a judgment according to works. If all sins were punished in Christ there would be no need for a review of sin in that day. Passages such as Romans 2 : 6-16 and Revelation 20 : 11-13 completely oppose this idea. We will quote Revelation 21 : 8, 'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone'. If the objections were valid the verse would simply read: 'But the unbelieving shall have their part . . .' or 'But the Christ-rejecting shall have their part in the lake of fire'.

No! We cannot allow such notions. Those for whom Christ died must be cleared of guilt, otherwise His death was in vain and substitution has no meaning. Toplady has beautifully expressed the truth in his hymn:

If my discharge Thou hast procured,
And freely in my room endured
The whole of wrath Divine:
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine.

2. RECONCILIATION.

Reconciliation is the restoration of peace and fellowship between those who were formerly estranged. To achieve reconciliation the cause of estrangement must be removed. The apostle Paul tells us, 'When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son' (Romans 5 : 10). The cause of our estrangement from God was our sin. This being dealt with by the death of God's Son, we are reconciled to Him. The universalist takes the statement, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself' (2 Corinthians 5 : 19) to refer literally to every person in the world; but if the sins of all were borne by Christ and all were reconciled to God, then there would be no more estrangement from God—all would be at peace with Him. James writes, 'Whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God' (James 4 : 4). Do God's enemies have peace with Him? Those reconciled to God are those whose sins Christ bore. All others are at enmity with God.

3. REDEMPTION.

Redemption is deliverance, often by the payment of a price. 'Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ' (1 Peter 1 : 18, 19). The price for our deliverance was the life blood of the Son of God. Redemption is from many things: 'from the curse of the law' (Galatians 3 : 15); 'from all iniquity' (Titus 2 : 14); 'from the power of darkness' (Colossians 1 : 13); 'from this present evil world' (Galatians 1 : 4); 'from the wrath to come' (1 Thessalonians 1 : 10); and finally from the corruption of the body, which is yet in the future—'the redemption of the body' (Romans 8 : 23).

This redemption was accomplished for those to whom it is or will be applied. Certainly all are not delivered from the power of sin, nor will all be delivered from the wrath to come. As we quoted earlier, Hebrews 9 : 12 tells us that Christ 'obtained eternal redemption for us'. He did much more than make it available, He secured redemption for His people. The unbelieving are not redeemed any more than the Egyptians were redeemed from Egypt at the time of the Exodus.

We believe that the doctrine of universal redemption is unscriptural, having no support save only in the superficial reading of a number of texts. It is unreasonable and illogical, for it makes Christ die for all yet all are not saved. It dishonours God, for it portrays Him as lacking in purpose, having no definite design in the atonement. It undermines His sovereignty, for it presents the Almighty as unable to achieve the salvation of any particular person.

By contrast, we are filled with wonder, love and praise that 'the Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me' (Galatians 2 : 20). We believe that God chose a people from eternity: that the Lord Jesus Christ in His death accomplished a perfect and an eternal redemption for these elect people: that every single one of those for whom Christ died will be brought to repentance and faith by the sovereign working of the Holy Spirit; and that these shall be preserved and presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. We can only say with Jude, 'To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen' (Jude 25).

Difficulties in the doctrine of particular redemption

We do not suggest for a moment that this doctrine is free from difficulties. We recognise that many sincere Christians believe in universal redemption because many verses of Scripture appear to teach it. Perhaps most of the literature on the

subject of particular redemption has not dealt adequately with the problems. For a thorough treatment of the doctrine of particular redemption and of the objections and difficulties associated with it, the reader is referred to John Owen's *The Death of Death*, published by the Banner of Truth. For the moment we shall content ourselves with a brief examination of the principal passages of Scripture which appear to teach universal redemption. Such passages fall into three main groups:

1. *Those using the word 'world' (Greek 'kosmos')*. This word is used about 160 times in the New Testament, largely by the apostle John. It is often assumed to mean every person living in the world. However, even a superficial examination of its use will show that this is not always its meaning.

- (a) Sometimes it is used geographically: 'He (Jesus—the Light) was in the world, and the world was made by him' (John 1 : 10). Also I Corinthians 5 : 10.
- (b) Sometimes it is used of people over a wide area: 'I thank my God . . . that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world' (Romans 1 : 8). Also 1 Peter 5 : 9.
- (c) Sometimes it is used of many people: 'The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him' (John 12 : 19).
- (d) Sometimes it is used by way of contrast to God's people: ' . . . the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive' (John 14 : 17). Also John 17 : 9.
- (e) Sometimes it is used of the undesirable realm of this life, as contrasted with the kingdom of God: 'Love not the world' (1 John 2 : 15). Also James 4 : 4.

Rarely, if ever, does it refer to every person without exception.

Let us examine some of the texts using this word 'world': 1 John 2 : 2: 'He (Jesus Christ) is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world' Propitiation means appeasement, that which turns away wrath. As Jacob returns from Padan-aram to Canaan he hears that his brother Esau is coming toward him with four hundred men. Thinking that Esau intends to harm him, Jacob sends a series of gifts to his brother from his flocks and herds, to try and pacify him. He is attempting to propitiate his brother. He hopes that the gifts will prove a propitiation to Esau. The Lord Jesus Christ is a propitiation for our sins, in that through His death, God's wrath is turned away from us, having fallen upon His own Son. If God's wrath is turned away from the whole world, then He is no longer angry with anyone. But

does not the Bible tell a different story? 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men' (Romans 1 : 18); 'He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him' (John 3 : 36).

For another use of the expression 'whole world', see Romans 1 : 8: 'Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world'. Obviously this cannot mean every person without exception. 'The world' must mean men—some men, throughout the world. This must also be the meaning in 1 John 2 : 2. That there is a limitation is plain; the difficulty is in knowing exactly how the limitation is applied. Many commentators believe that John is addressing primarily Jews when he says 'He is the propitiation for our sins', but that he also emphasises that this work of Christ is not for Jews only but also for Gentiles too—people of the whole world. The term is used similarly in many other verses, such as John 1 : 29, 'The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world'. If the sin of the entire world were taken away, there would be nothing to account for at the judgment. John 6 : 33, 'The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world'. Again, if this were all-inclusive, then all have passed from death unto life; but we know this is confined to those who believe, as John 5 : 24 tells us: 'He that heareth my words and believeth on him that sent me . . . is passed from death unto life'.

You may wonder why the New Testament writers did not express themselves more clearly so as to avoid any possibility of ambiguity. These things were well understood by the early Christians and needed no qualification. When we say 'the kettle is boiling' or speak of the sun 'rising', do we need to explain that it is not really the kettle but rather the water that is boiling, or that the sun is not rising but rather it is the earth that is rotating?

2. A second group of verses that give difficulty are *those that use the words 'all' or 'every man'*.

It is a simple matter to demonstrate that these terms are often used in a restricted sense. For example, Jesus said, 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me' (John 12 : 32). Speaking of Christ, Paul said, 'Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus' (Colossians 1 : 28). No one will for a moment imagine that Christ draws all men without exception to Himself, or that Paul preached to every person on earth. The 'every man' in Colossians 1 : 28

refers to all within the sphere of Paul's ministry. The 'all men' that Christ draws to Himself are all without distinction, that is distinction of nationality. The words were prompted by the fact that certain Gentiles were seeking Him. For the Gospel to exert the world-wide effect that it was intended to have, Christ must first die. In His death, His being 'lifted up', He would draw all, not only Jews but Gentiles as well, unto Himself.

Let us examine some problem texts:

1 Timothy 2 : 4: 'Who (God) will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.' If God's will is for all men literally to be saved, then He is completely frustrated in His purpose. The 'all' here is not all men without exception but all men without distinction, that is, all kinds of men, including kings and those in authority, for whom we are bidden to pray in verses 1 and 2.

2 Peter 3 : 9: 'The Lord . . . is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' The 'all' are the elect. The context is important in understanding this. The question being considered here is the scoffers' taunt 'where is the promise of his coming?' (verse 4). In answering this, Peter explains that the reason why Christ has not yet returned is that God is waiting for 'all' to come to repentance. If it meant every person on earth, then God would have to wait a long time!

Hebrews 2 : 9: 'We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.' To taste death was to drink the cup containing the wrath of God against sinners, and to receive the punishment for sin—death. If Christ tasted death for or in behalf of every person without exception, then they will not need to drink it for themselves. No! The 'every man' corresponds to the 'many sons' who are brought to glory, as in verse 10.

3. The third group of passages are *those that appear to teach that Christ died for some who will be lost.*

If only one person for whom Christ died is said to perish, then for that person at least, the blood of the Son of God was shed in vain. It is then only a short step to reason that He might have died for others also who will not eternally benefit from His death, and so He may well have died for all without exception. What do these verses say?

1 Corinthians 8 : 11: 'And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?' Romans 14 : 15 is similar. In these passages, the reference is to circumstances (such as eating meat that has been offered to idols) where a

person acts without conscious guilt himself, but in doing so causes another to stumble. In each case 'brothers' are considered, those who are members of God's family by faith in Jesus Christ; so the question is not only whether some may perish for whom Christ died, but whether a believer may be lost. This of course is unthinkable in the light of such verses as John 10 : 28. Speaking of His sheep, Jesus said: 'I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish'. The passages are best viewed hypothetically and are used as warnings to us in our treatment of fellow Christians.

2 Peter 2 : 1: 'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.' This is perhaps the most difficult verse of all. There is nothing hypothetical here. False teachers will come, and they will undoubtedly perish. The question is, were they really saved? Were they actually bought (redeemed) with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, the doctrine of particular redemption falls down here. If the word for 'Lord' were the usual expression for the Lord Jesus—'kurios', then this verse would be out of harmony with the rest of Scripture. However, the word used is 'despotes', meaning a despot, one who rules with an iron fist. The word only appears ten times in the New Testament, and nowhere else does it refer to the Lord Jesus Christ. We will note the occurrences:

Four times it is translated 'Lord' and refers to God the Father: Luke 2 : 29, Simeon with the babe, Jesus, in his arms prays to God, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace'. Acts 4 : 24, the disciples under threat of persecution pray to God, 'Lord, thou art God'. In verse 27 they refer to 'thy holy child Jesus'. Jude 4, Jude writes of those who deny 'the only Lord (despotes) God, and our Lord (kurios) Jesus Christ'. Revelation 6 : 10, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?' He that sits on the throne (the Judge) is distinct from the Lamb—see verse 16.

Five times the word is used of earthly masters; 1 Timothy 6 : 1, 2; 2 Timothy 2 : 21; Titus 2 : 9; 1 Peter 2 : 18. Although 2 Timothy 2 : 21 may refer indirectly to Christ, it is only by analogy. The passage is metaphorical, speaking of an earthly house, its master and the vessels in it. 'In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel

unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use' (2 Timothy 2 : 20, 21).

So, returning to 2 Peter 2 : 1, it is doubtful whether Christ is referred to, and therefore equally doubtful whether the buying is redemption by blood. Probably the word 'bought' is used in the broader Old Testament sense of deliverance—perhaps from idolatry.

It is hoped that the reader will see that we have not attempted to 'explain away' the passages which at first appear to teach universal redemption. Rather, we have sought to establish the true meaning of each passage in the light of its context, and by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Other objections to the doctrine

In conclusion we will examine briefly some other objections often put forward against the doctrine of particular redemption.

1. *It is unfair*, for it means that some will have no chance of salvation. Of course, this objection applies equally to the doctrine of election. *We answer*, first, that it would be perfectly fair if all were damned, for all deserve to be. If God in His grace determined to save some, what objection can justly be raised? Secondly, those who are not elect and therefore not redeemed do not desire salvation anyway, so no-one is being denied what he wants. We 'all with one consent began to make excuse' (Luke 14 : 18), so a compelling grace must work if any are to be saved at all.

2. *It stifles evangelism*. If Christ only died for the elect, then we cannot make a universal offer of salvation, for there is not provision for all. *We answer*, the Scriptures clearly command that the Gospel be preached to 'every creature'. This we seek to do without reservation or inhibition. There is an abundance of Scriptures that makes it plain that salvation is available to whosoever will come. All who sincerely ask for forgiveness will receive it. Those who truly seek eternal life will find it. Every person who knocks at the door of God's kingdom will be admitted. None will ever be able to say that they genuinely sought God's salvation and did not find it, otherwise Jesus Christ would be a liar for He said, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you' (Matthew 7 : 7). Again, the apostle Paul wrote, 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved' (Romans 10 : 13). The preaching of the Gospel is the means of reaching and drawing the elect and we can unreservedly announce the sufficiency of Christ's death for all who will come to Him. He said Himself, 'him that cometh to

me I will in no wise cast out' (John 6 : 37), but He also made clear in the first part of the verse who would come to Him. 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.' In verse 44 Jesus said, 'No man can come to me, except the Father . . . draw him'. We invite all to come to Christ, but we do not preach that Christ has died for all and that men have only to believe this to be saved. Rather we urge men to repent and to cast themselves on the mercy of God, assuring them that all who do so will receive forgiveness.

It is an interesting exercise to study the messages preached in the book of Acts. Nowhere is it said that Christ died for all. Notice some of their 'appeals': 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out' (Acts 3 : 19). 'Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses' (Acts 13 : 38, 39). 'God . . . commandeth all men everywhere to repent' (Acts 17 : 30).

As far as the provision of salvation is concerned, there is no need for the provision to be co-extensive with the offer. For example, if a store advertises an item in a newspaper with a circulation of a million, it does not need to stock one million of the item, knowing that only a small proportion of those reading the advertisement will respond. So with salvation, although a universal offer is made, God knows that only the elect will respond.

3. *It discourages the unconverted*, for some may want to be saved yet doubt the provision. *We answer*, we have already said that none who genuinely desires and seeks God's salvation will be rejected. The fact that God will sovereignly save some is the only thing that gives men any hope at all. If concerned, they will cast themselves on the mercy of God and will find a gracious pardon. If a person shows true concern, it is a good indication that the Holy Spirit is working within him to draw him to Christ, and therefore that he is one of those for whom Christ died. The only person who may be discouraged by our doctrine is the one who vainly thinks that without any conviction of sin he may 'decide' for Christ. In which case the Church will be spared one more spurious convert.

4. The doctrine limits the atoning work of Christ. This has sinister overtones! *We answer*, the limitation is not in the value of the atonement but in its application. We believe with the universalist that Christ's atonement is of sufficient value to redeem a million worlds, but we differ from them in believing

that Christ's death had a specific object. Charles Haddon Spurgeon has admirably answered this objection and we will conclude by quoting him:

'We are often told that we limit the atonement of Christ, because we say that Christ has not made a satisfaction for all men, or all men would be saved. Now, our reply to this is, that, on the other hand, our opponents limit it; we do not. The Arminians say, Christ died for all men. Ask them what they mean by it. Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of all men? They say, "No, certainly not". We ask them the next question—Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of any man in particular? They answer "No". They are obliged to admit this, if they are consistent. They say, "No; Christ has died that any man may be saved if"—and then follow certain conditions of salvation. Now, who is it that limits the death of Christ? Why, you. You say that Christ did not die so as to infallibly secure the salvation of anybody. We beg your pardon, when you say we limit Christ's death; we say, "No, my dear sir, it is you that do it". We say Christ so died that He infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number, who through Christ's death not only may be saved, but are saved, must be saved, and cannot by any possibility run the hazard of being anything but saved. You are welcome to your atonement; you may keep it. We will never renounce ours for the sake of it.'*

* The above quotation is from an article entitled 'For whom Christ died' in the 'Banner of Truth magazine, issue No. 5.

MARTIN LUTHER

THE WORK OF REFORMATION PROCEEDS

S. M. HOUGHTON

In 20th-century days evangelicals tend to be nauseated by the ever-present stress 'in the news' upon the 'star-dom' of this or that individual, chiefly of course in the world of entertainment. The puppet 'stars' of the show-world have their little day and shortly cease to be. Like the shooting stars of the midnight skies, their shining is but for a moment. How much more entitled to the term 'stars' are those who shine in the firmament of the Kingdom of Heaven! The words of the prophet assure us that 'they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever'. Their day is yet to come; in the present age they may even be accounted 'the offscouring of all things' (as the Apostle Paul speaks), but in the eyes of the Lord 'they are the ministers of the churches and the glory of Christ'.

Such stars are held in the right hand of the Son of man (Rev. 1 : 16, 20). Their light proceeds from their relationship with Him. They have no light of their own but reflect the shining of the One who is Himself the 'brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person' (Heb. 1 : 3). Reformation days were brightened by a galaxy of stars centred in and revolving around the Sun of Righteousness. Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Melancthon, and dozens of other Continentals of lesser fame—not to mention British reformers—all reflected Gospel light.

Then, too, there were men who desired a reformation but wished it to be a very limited one. They wanted a reformation within the Roman Catholic Church, and merely desired the glaring abuses of the time to be remedied. Such practices as the worship of images and the superstitious use of relics they detested and scorned, but they showed little desire for a pure form of worship based upon the Word of God alone, and even less for a system of doctrine conformed to the same Holy Book. They were quite willing to remain obedient to the Pope of Rome, and they clung to the traditions of men.

Chief among men of this type was Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, one of the best scholars of his time, with a reputation which extended throughout Europe. It was Erasmus who edited the Greek New Testament which became the basis of

translations into modern European languages, including Luther's German version. But Erasmus did not seek any change of doctrine within the Roman Church. He was too fearful of his reputation as a man of letters, and of his academic standing in the princely courts and great universities of the West, to put forward or yield support to the doctrine of the reformers, and at one time he and Luther engaged in keen controversy. The fact is that Erasmus believed Christianity to be essentially a system of morality; for doctrine he had little liking. He aimed at a return to the simplicity of life and religion by the elimination of the superstitions and abuses which had crept into the church during a thousand or more years, but he had no wish for the peace of church and state to be disturbed by doctrinal disputes. In 1524 he wrote a work called the *Diatribes*, or *A Discussion concerning Free Will*. Actually, and contrary to his wishes, it precipitated the very thing he wished to avoid, namely, contention; but he had yielded to pressure from various Romanist parties to write a treatise against Luther. Among those who urged him to do so was Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, the man who had previously refused permission to Tyndale to translate the Bible into English. A first draft of Erasmus' work was sent to King Henry VIII, who had himself written against Luther and in defence of the seven Roman Catholic sacraments, the work for which he was awarded by the Pope the title of Defender of the Faith. Erasmus chose Free Will as his theme because he regarded the denial of the freedom of the human will to be greatly overdone by Luther and to have been given undue importance. He defined Free Will as 'a power of the human will by which man may apply himself to those things that lead to eternal salvation or turn away from the same'. In other words, he held that the natural man, by his own strength and without divine aid, has the power to turn to God, to exercise faith in Christ, and to bring himself into a state of salvation. He held that God helps those who help themselves, that a man must of himself turn Godwards and then God will reward him with saving grace. This given, the man can perform good works and thus put God under obligation to justify him by the mingled merits of faith and works.

Luther's remarkable and excellent treatise entitled *The Bondage of the Will** was his reply to the claims of Erasmus. In it he produced abundant evidence that the will of fallen man was far from freedom and righteousness, and completely incapable in and of itself of turning to God. The Dutchman evidenced the weakness of his theology by his utter failure to

counter the sword-thrusts of the German reformer. We cannot here enter deeply or extensively into the dispute, but it deserves to be said that in the opinion of two modern scholars of repute who have jointly produced a new translation of *The Bondage of the Will*,* with an excellent Introduction, 'Nowhere does Luther come closer, either in spirit or in substance to the Paul of Romans and Galatians' than in this treatise. It may be added, too, that, in Luther's view, Erasmus' doctrine robbed God of His sovereignty, and by way of illustration he uses Augustine's illustration which runs thus: 'Man's will is like a beast standing between two riders. If God rides, it wills and goes where God wills; if Satan rides, it wills and goes where Satan wills'. Nor may it choose to which rider it will run, or which it will seek, but the riders themselves fight to decide who shall have and hold it'. The theology of Erasmus, based upon Romanism and scholasticism, gives power and glory to man, sinful man; the theology of Luther based solidly on Scripture, and Scripture alone, gives all the glory of salvation to God, and to God alone.

Yet the numerous writings of the scholarly Dutchman threw much ridicule on Catholic practices and thereby indirectly helped forward the work of the true reformers. Even before the heyday of Erasmus (who himself did much work before Luther became a world figure), a German scholar named John Reuchlin had been used by God to prepare the ground for the reformation by reviving the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages which, during the Middle Ages, had been grievously neglected. In fact the few who tried to acquaint themselves with the original languages of Scripture were on that very account looked upon with suspicion, and regarded by many as heretics or on the verge of heresy. The recently published *Cambridge History of the Bible* states that 'not the least part of Reuchlin's achievement was that he influenced princes and humanists to help to establish chairs of Hebrew in the universities of the Empire, and through his pupils, and correspondence on Hebrew studies, raised up scholars to fill them'. In his work, *The Rudiments of the Hebrew Language*, he concludes with what the same *History* terms 'a curious combination of biblical piety and classical allusion common to the humanists: . . . "For this remember me, O God, and spare me according to the multitude of Thy mercies . . . I have finished a monument more enduring than brass".' (See Nehemiah 13 : 22, and

* *The Bondage of the Will*: a new translation by J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (James Clarke & Co.), 1957.

Horace, Odes III : 30). Certain it is that the work of such men as Erasmus and Reuchlin contributed to a revival of interest in Scripture, and to this extent at least they made the work of Luther more easy.

The share taken by various parties in the work of reformation is aptly illustrated by a humorous episode enacted before the Emperor Charles V in 1530. It was a device for advising him of the truth concerning the progress of religious change without angering him, in just such a way as the court jesters of earlier kings were expected not only to amuse the court, but to convey to the royal ears unpleasant information or sound wisdom under the disguise of buffoonery. It happened that, in the year mentioned, the Emperor was in the city of Augsburg holding a Diet, with a view to reconciling the Catholics and those who held the doctrine of Luther. One day as he was dining in company with his courtiers, he was told that a pageant had been arranged for the amusement of the court and that the performers waited upon his pleasure. But what follows is best given in the graphic words of Dr. J. A. Wylie:

'First, an old man, in a doctor's gown, tottered across the floor, carrying a burden of sticks, some long, some short. Throwing down the sticks on the hearth in confusion, he turned to retire. On his back, now displayed to the courtiers, was the name—JOHN REUCHLIN. A second mask (i.e. masked figure) now entered, also attired as a doctor. He went up to the hearth and began deftly arranging the sticks. He worked assiduously for a little while, but despite his pains, the long and short, the crooked and the straight, would not pair; so, giving up his task, with a sardonic smile on his countenance, he made his exit. Charles and his lords, as he walked out, read on his back—ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM.

'A third now entered; this time it was a monk in the frock and cowl of the Augustines. With keen eye and firm step he crossed the hall, bearing a brazier filled with live coals. He raked the sticks together, not waiting to sort them, put a coal beneath the heap, blew it up, and soon a blazing fire was roaring on the hearth. As he withdrew he showed on his back—MARTIN LUTHER. The plot was thickening.

'A fourth appeared—a stately personage, covered with the insignia of empire. He gazes with displeasure at the fire. He draws his sword and plunges it in amongst the burning faggots; the more they are stirred the more fiercely they blaze. He strikes again and again; the flame mounts higher and the red sparks fall thicker around. It is plain he is feeding, not quenching, the fire. The mask turns and strides across the hall

in great anger. He has no name, nor is it necessary; everyone divines it, though no one utters it.

'Yet another—a fifth. He comes forward with solemn and portly air. His robes, which are of great magnificence, are priestly. He wears a triple crown on his head, and the keys of St. Peter are suspended from his girdle. On seeing the fire this great personage is seized with sudden anguish, and wrings his hands. He looks round for something with which to extinguish it. He spies at the farther end of the hall two vessels, one containing water and the other oil. He rushes eagerly to get hold of the one containing the water; in his hurry he clutches the wrong vessel, that filled with oil, and empties it on the fire. The fire blazes up with a fury that sings his priestly robe, and compels its unfortunate wearer to escape for his safety. The comedy is at an end.'

It is, alas, a common thing for men to oppose the work of God; but it is also not uncommon for the wise to be taken in their own craftiness, and for the counsel of the froward to be carried headlong. (See Job 5 : 13.) 'There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord' (Proverbs 21 : 30). Both emperor and Pope found to their dismay that all they did, in an attempt to stamp out the heresy of Luther, but served to fan the flame, a predicament which the Emperor found himself compelled to acknowledge. How to deal with such a situation he did not know. Ultimately, after much bitter strife, the followers of Luther received official recognition within the Empire, but not until after Luther's death.

It is not proposed to trace in detail, or even in outline, in these pages, the work in which Luther engaged from 1526 until his death in 1546. It is work which is intimately linked up with the history of Germany throughout this period. Before 1526 Luther had fought the Reformation battle in Germany almost single-handed, but after 1526 he was assisted (or hindered) by men of all types and dispositions; some chiefly concerned for their personal advantage or advancement, others interested merely because of the effect of Luther's teachings on the government of their territories, and yet others doubtless genuinely interested in the spiritual aspect of the Reformation. The result was that in states where the Reformation was welcomed, people and princes formed alliances and counter-alliances against states which remained Catholic, and for many years to come Germany was torn asunder by these conflicting parties. An incident at the very commencement of the struggle

is specially worthy of note, for it is a memorable episode in European history and marks the origin of the word **PROTESTANT**.

In April, 1529, Charles V saw fit to summon the princes of Germany to the city of Spires in order that steps might be taken to strengthen the Roman Catholic Church within his Empire. He had observed with much apprehension and misgiving the rapid spread throughout Germany of Luther's doctrine and he desired to exert his power and influence against it ere it became too late. Many of the reformed princes were, however, resolved to make a bold stand for their faith, and in words which have echoed and re-echoed through the centuries, they stated, in no uncertain manner, their belief in the supreme authority of the Word of God. Their **PROTEST**, which is worthy to be written in letters of gold, includes the following words:

'We are resolved, with the grace of God, to maintain the pure and exclusive preaching of His Holy Word, such as is contained in the Biblical Books of the Old and New Testament, without adding anything thereto that may be contrary to it. **THIS WORD IS THE ONLY TRUTH**; it is the sure rule of all doctrine and of all life, and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the powers of hell, whilst all the human vanities that are set up against it shall fall before the face of God.

'For these reasons, most dear lords, uncles, cousins, and friends, we earnestly entreat you to weigh carefully our grievances and our motives. If you do not yield to our request, **WE PROTEST . . .** before God, our only Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Saviour, and who will one day be our Judge, as well as before all men and all creatures, that we, for us and for our people, neither consent nor adhere in any manner whatsoever . . . in anything that is contrary to God, to His Holy Word, to our right conscience, and to the salvation of our souls.'

In this way the word **PROTESTANT** originated. It has, alas, often been applied to much that is contrary to the Word of God, but in the first place it simply represented the unflinching demand made by the princes of Germany to obey God rather than men. It is the echo of Luther's personal and solitary protest at Worms nine years earlier. Hence any people who call themselves Protestants but who neither believe nor obey the whole Word of God are unworthy of the name.

During the disputes concerning Protestantism which divided the German States into opposing camps, Martin Luther remained busily engaged in the translation of the Old Testament into the language of the people. It will be remembered that his German translation of the New Testament was accomplished during his imprisonment in the Wartburg; and just as Tyndale, after publishing his English translation of the New Testament, turned his attention to the Old, so Luther, who was skilled in the Hebrew language, desired that his literary labours should be crowned by the publication of a complete German Bible. Unlike Tyndale, however, whose life was cut short by his foes before he could finish his task, Luther was spared to see his work go through the printing press, and he found a special pleasure in the fact that he was thus God's instrument for the blessing of the German nation.

Luther always laid great stress on the advantages to be derived from the reading of the Word of God. 'Were I but a great poet,' he said, 'I would write a magnificent poem on the utility and the efficacy of the Divine Word. Without that Word what should we be? For several years I read the whole Bible twice in every twelvemonth. It is a great and powerful tree, each word of which is a mighty branch: each of these branches have I shaken, so desirous was I to learn what fruit every one of them bore, and what they could give me. Each time I succeeded in obtaining a couple of either pears or apples. In former times, under the Papacy, pilgrimages were undertaken to visit the saints. People went to Rome, to Jerusalem, to Compostella*, to expiate their sins. Nowadays, we perform our Christian pilgrimage by means of faith. . . . We did these things then, knowing no better; 'tis the Pope's interest to encourage such lies. Now, thank God, we have the Gospels, the Psalms, and the other words of God. To them we can make pilgrimages more useful than any others; in them we can visit and contemplate the true promised land, the true Jerusalem, the true Paradise. In them we walk, not amid the tombs of saints, or over their mortal relics, but in their hearts, their thoughts, their spirit.'

The Reformer at times found it extremely difficult to translate from Hebrew into German. Differences in grammar, in idiom, in the modes of expression, sometimes caused him almost to despair of expressing in his own language the exact force of the original. 'How difficult it is,' he wrote, 'to make these Jewish writers speak German. They struggle furiously before they will give up their Hebrew to our barbarous tongue.'

* A place of pilgrimage in the north-west corner of Spain.

'Tis as though Philomela (the nightingale), forgetting her sweet melody, were to imitate the cuckoo's monotonous note.' He tells us also that while translating the Bible he sometimes occupied several weeks in hunting out, and meditating upon, the significance of a single word. Obviously Luther believed in the full inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; he realised that every word was the best word in the best place, and he did not shrink from the most arduous toil so that he might place before the German people a faithful rendering of the Word given by God.

Luther completed his translation of the Old Testament in sections, one of which, including the prophecy of Daniel, he sent to John Frederick, Duke of Saxony, the state to which the Reformer belonged. The letter which accompanied the translation contained the following interesting statement: 'The historians relate to the honour of Alexander the Great, that he always carried Homer's poems about with him, and at night deposited the precious volume beneath his pillow. How much more just that the same honour, and even greater honours, should be rendered to the prophet Daniel by all the kings and princes of the earth? They ought not merely to place him under their heads; they should treasure him up in their hearts, for he teaches great things indeed.'

Another interesting comment is attached to the sending of a translation of the 118th Psalm to Frederick, abbot of Nuremberg, especially in view of the fact that Psalm 46 is frequently called 'Luther's Psalm'. 'This is my own psalm,' wrote the Reformer; 'my favourite psalm. I love them all, I love the whole gospel, for it is my sole consolation, my sole life; but I have more especially attached myself to this psalm, and have, in truth, a sort of right to call it my own. It has deserved well of me; it has saved me from many a difficulty, whence neither the emperor, nor kings, nor wise men, nor saints, could have extricated me. It is my friend, dearer to me than all the honours, all the power of the earth. I would not exchange it for the whole earth, if I could.'

In addition to the translation of the Scriptures, Luther wrote many treatises on spiritual subjects, the most famous of them all being an Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. This Epistle had been made by God of untold value to Luther's soul. It taught him that salvation was not of man, but of the Lord; not of works, but of grace; and that men are justified by faith in Christ without the deeds of the law. How many there are who are looking to their own supposed good works and kind deeds and harmlessness to others, and general amiability, to save them from hell! Against all such, Luther's

Exposition of the Letter to the Galatians speaks in a voice of thunder. On the other hand, to many afflicted Christians, and to some who have been greatly distressed through temptations and fears, the book has come as a messenger of comfort. In this connection the testimony of John Bunyan in *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners* is very interesting. He wrote thus:

'God, in whose hands are all our days and ways, did cast into my hand, one day, a book of Martin Luther; it was his Comment on Galatians—it also was so old that it was ready to fall piece from piece if I did but turn it over. Now I was pleased much that such an old book had fallen into my hands; the which, when I had but a little way perused, I found my condition, in his experience, so largely and profoundly handled, as if his book had been written out of my heart. This made me marvel; for thus thought I, This man could not know anything of the state of Christians now, but must needs write and speak the experience of former days. Besides, he doth most gravely, also, in that book, debate of the rise of these temptations, namely blasphemy, desperation, and the like; showing that the law of Moses as well as the devil, death, and hell, hath a very great hand therein, the which, at first, was very strange to me; but considering and watching, I found it so indeed. But of particulars here I intend nothing; only this, methinks, I must let fall before all men, I do prefer this book of Martin Luther upon the Galatians, excepting the Holy Bible, before all the books that ever I have seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience.'

* * * * *

Towards the end of the year 1545, the great Reformer felt that his end was near, nor was he grieved to think that this was so. He did not desire his departure to be with Christ to be long postponed. The strain of former years had resulted in great physical weakness, and he was utterly weary of earth. 'I would fain bid farewell to the world,' he wrote. He regarded it, indeed, as a miracle, that his life had not been cut short by the hand of the assassin or the murderer, for the hatred with which he was looked upon by staunch Roman Catholics was bitter in the extreme. Many sought his death but without avail. Every plot against him was frustrated. The labourer could not depart until he had finished his testimony. Up to the end he continued to pray, crying fervently to God for support, as death, his last enemy, drew near. 'O my Father,' he said, 'Thou, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thou, the source of

all consolation, I thank Thee for having revealed unto me Thy well-beloved Son, in Whom I believe, Whom I have preached, and acknowledged, and made known; Whom I have loved and celebrated, and Whom the Pope and the ungodly persecute. I commend my soul to Thee, O my Lord Jesus Christ! I am about to quit this body of earth and to be removed from this life, but I know that I shall abide eternally with Thee.' Three times in succession he then repeated the words of John 3 : 16, and in Latin, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth'. 'Wilt thou stand by Christ and the doctrine thou hast preached?' asked those about him. 'Yes,' came the earnest and emphatic reply. Fifteen minutes later, writes a historian, 'he fetched one deep even breath and was gone. It was between two and three o'clock in the morning of February 18th, 1546'.

CONTRIBUTORS THIS MONTH

Rev. Paul Tucker, Minister, East London Tabernacle.

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Concluded from page 156

numbered amongst those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb? Will you be rejoicing in salvation, praising Him that He has come to take you to be with Himself, or will it be the day of gloom, of condemnation, of utter darkness? There is a way, and a place where we may be sure that in that day we shall meet Him unashamed. That place is Calvary, where He died for sinners and that way is the way of faith, when we simply reach out our hand in faith to receive the gift of God which is eternal life, when we put our trust in Him as our Saviour. I say to you this morning—If you are uncertain about the future, if you are not sure where you stand spiritually, close with God's offer of mercy; turn to Christ, flee from the wrath to come, set your hope upon Him and upon Him alone. In that day it will be 'joy unspeakable and full of glory', for He shall reign for ever and ever.

John Owen and Education

PETER TOON

The subject of education is of perennial interest to Christians, and those Christians who hold fast to the Reformed Faith are always ready to hear what the great leaders of the past had to say about Christian Education. Since 1721, when they were first printed, the Orations delivered by John Owen at the University of Oxford between 1652 and 1657 have remained in the Latin tongue and thus out of the reach of many people. But now, at last, they are available in English. They open up for us aspects of Owen's mind on education that his theological books do not reveal. Here is one of the six extant Orations:

FIFTH ORATION¹

I have always prayed, gentlemen of the University, that although I might be the most unworthy Vice-Chancellor of the University, nevertheless I should not be known as the last to hold office. Since this happy day will soon fulfil my wish, I cannot but eagerly congratulate this venerable convocation and the whole University. After being buffeted by so many storms, all but buried by so many troublesome billows, assailed on all sides by the blasts of adverse winds, surely I am allowed to congratulate myself also, as now at last I come into harbour. For, indeed, if those things with whose presentiment I have often refreshed my depressed spirits when I had been driven away from my studies and was worn out by the tedium of toil and travel and full to the brim of the affairs of others, peace and quiet alone are the things which I do not yet seem to have attained. It is of no value to you to know, nor worthwhile for me to go over, how much it meant to me to lay aside the government of the University, how great and persistent was my zeal in the attempt, and finally the all but impudent manner in which I sought to persuade certain very important men to allow me to resign.² The fact that this day, long awaited by you and by me, will have taken no less than five years to dawn arises from the nature of the circumstances in which we live. The stars, so we hear, moved very close to the Supreme

Mover, and for that reason, either by His will or sheer necessity, were assigned the task of moving very slowly, and, in keeping with their nature, peacefully, uninfluenced by the host of lower heavenly bodies. Likewise, since the University has approached near to the Supreme Mover of our race, and although in the heavenly convulsion of all things which our nation has been undergoing it has revolved faster in the safety of its own orbit, nevertheless it needed a movement, peculiar and fitting to itself, in order to advance slowly. And so at length with victory won, although the conflict was long drawn out, I gladly sit me down now that fate has offered me a place of repose. Yet it is not only because I have escaped that I am entitled to boast—although this is a considerable, even great achievement—but also because despite the buffeting of my ship I draw into shore neither shipwrecked nor laid open to the wantonness of pirates. Behold, your ship, the University, tossed by mountainous billows, yet safe and sound—nay, almost beyond belief—fitted together at the joints with greater strength than usual, very soon to be entrusted to the hands of a skilled captain³ while fortune smiles and the sea is calm. This alone remains for me, to die in a fitting manner. Our cause—the University and learning—are saved; let orthodox religion remain and I am now pleased to die without hesitation. And so I shall die, gentlemen, with my duty complete almost at the same time as my days. Do not expect learned groans, or erudite death-cries. He who has learnt to rely on a good conscience during his lifetime will have no need of elegance at the point of death.⁴

Neither am I here to celebrate my high office, for my accession caused me to blush no more than it gives me pain to have laid it aside. The taking up of my office and the laying down of the same was and is so distant from my desires as I have always wanted to be even more distant from all dishonour and disgrace. And yet indeed, if I had not considered it a rather unfair custom for retiring officials to blow their own trumpets, relate their own achievements and the faults of others, I would be able to proclaim a number of accomplishments (and this would not be mere boasting) which I first and I alone, achieved during my term of office. But it is not only that my opinions and character are far removed from keeping to this custom, but also the habits of those, whose desire is for a great life rather than great words, and to do good rather than to receive the praise of many, must of necessity turn in a different direction. My office which I did not accept as a token of honour—I would wish such an acknowledgement to be further from my

prayers than from my services if possible—I resign and not because I am worn out by wearisome toil. My reason for embarking, continuing and now finally retiring was a consideration of your interests. It was because others reckoned that in some way I could be of help and assistance to your cause that I entered upon the office; and now, because in my opinion you need a more suitable and qualified man, I am willingly resigning. With a quiet mind I am becoming a private citizen without fearing the anger of those whom I knowingly and willingly injured, and without expecting thanks from those whom I decided to lay under obligation: for the former, I boldly proclaim, do not exist; of the latter there have been a number but it is not becoming for me to recall them.

I will now speak briefly, as custom dictates, about your affairs. This is the fifth year since the government of the University was put into my hands, despite my unworthiness. No man among us, I believe, is ignorant of the position of the gownsmen and the state of our affairs at the beginning of my term of office and since then. For the first two years we were a mere rabble and a subject of talk to the rabble. Our critical situation and our common interests were discussed out of journals and newspapers by every Tom, Dick and Harry. Nobody was so abjectly stupid as not to have either fear or hope on account of our situation. Such, indeed, was the will of the Sovereign Disposer of events—so that whatever is mortal would be held in lesser esteem among mortals. Further, it was not perhaps equitable that, whilst decay was invading empires and the highest ornaments of the world, the University alone should keep its blossom unimpaired. Meanwhile, very few ventured to the best of their powers to defend our cause, which ought to have been held sacred but was exposed to the greatest hazards. Indeed, such was the pitch of madness that to have stood up for the gownsmen was designated as a violation of religion and piety. On the other hand, everything that is rejected by respectable men and which is truly criminal was most plentifully charged on you every day by the malicious. And those who were more favourably disposed towards us were, nevertheless, so much occupied with their own affairs, that, deaf to our cries for help, and worn out with almost continual reproaches, all they could do was to utter words, contrive delays and make such pious sentiments as are usual concerning the dead. When, therefore, all our affairs were in confusion, placed between the hammer and the anvil, and destitute of all human help, what happened was not a miracle *ex machina* but, our most merciful Father looked down on us

from heaven. After it had become only too obvious to what an extreme, the audacity, rage and ignorance of some, from whom better things might have been expected, would have gone, the Governor of all things so quickly defeated all their councils and all their attempts, that with difficulty were those able to provide for their own interests, who, three days before, were most eagerly intent on swallowing up ours.⁵ Of that base attempt against the Universities which—with the anger and opposition of God—some insane creatures vainly engaged in, nothing at all remains except the signal disgrace and the never-to-be-forgotten insanity. As long, moreover, as there will be men who, with copious eloquence, shall be able to transmit in eternal records the deeds and decisions of the brave and wise, together with the infamy of the wicked, its authors will probably have reason to repent of that attempt. This was the end, this was the goal of the first solemn period of my office.

For you, gentlemen,

Have faced the rocks of the Cyclopes.

Revive your spirits, away with sadness and fear:

Perhaps one day you will be glad to look back on what you now endure.⁶ As long as some of us were wavering in mind on account of the anxiety caused us by our enemies, that reason, which ought to have been used, was not perhaps employed in some cases. But we are not legally bound to give an account for what action we took of our own accord, nor for what we could not have helped doing through the fault of someone else. The man who is stricken with care and intent on affairs of a diversity of natures, yet not only does he manage them but he manages them with wisdom and even meets with complete success, seems to me to be above the common lot of mortals. To have such an opinion of myself would be ungodly, to proclaim it immodest. If I have sinned against your cause by indulging in pleasure, languishing in idleness, anxiously increasing my possessions, if I have been trapped by the allurements of the age or addicted to any of the evil arts, I do not plead against being cast for ever in the lowest ignominy from my *alma mater's* bosom. It is surely right to infer that a man, who promoted godly practices and the due and zealous execution of practices prudently established of old in all the fields of arts and sciences, who was responsible for the introduction of some innovations in both disciplines—for the greatest benefit of all, and with no small renown to the University—and who reckoned that no expense, no toil should be spared so that literature either checked or suppressed or drawing sustenance from other sources should be capable of

advancement at least wished—relying on your good sense—to undertake something which would also meet the approval of all good men. But to put it briefly, it has come to pass in a manner obviously divine that we should hold Him alone responsible for our universal safety and all our progress. Even the blind could see that He has taken the accomplishment of our undertakings into His care. Whereas we are not able to give worthy thanks—lest, we be reckoned the most ungrateful of mortals—we above others ought now at last to weigh carefully the benefits we owe to Him. Alas! I am ashamed when I reckon up our habits, not to say the idleness, pride, vanity and wantonness of many, and of the shameful sins of some. Do these wrongs befit us? Or this behaviour? These pursuits? Where is our shame? Where our godliness? Whence shall I bring evidence of gratitude? To be frank, I fear sometimes lest the divine presence calls us to reckoning. Wake up at last you who have at heart the glory of God, the honour of godliness and the safety of literature. Wake up, I say, and having obtained another leader make every effort to prevent the University, which is laden with heavenly benefits, from perishing beneath a mountain of vices. I am not going to flatter you with soft words or set you on fire with verbal torches, trivia and frivolities. Despite my unworthiness, I plead God's cause: may the house which is now repaired remain to the glory of the most High: lest the learned grow haughty towards our benefactor, the greatest and the best, I have counted as nothing what is considered of greatest importance among the pundits of eloquence. I might sigh heavily over the fate of my *alma mater* if I did not blush to relate the unchained stupidity, idleness and arrogance of some younger men, or even the stubbornness and deplorable contempt of religion on the part of some Masters and the blindness and ignorance of others concerning the things of God. For what godliness calls me to deplore, modesty and bashfulness forbid me to mention. But my eyes have not been so blinded by grief or indignation that I could not see and give boundless praise every day to a great number of men, distinguished in every kind of virtuous pursuit. Thanks be to God, the University has men of letters who are considered among the most eminent, whose untarnished godliness does not stand in need of the reward of our praise; and, if it were not too much against our customs to praise my friends to their faces, I would most willingly give due praise to these innumerable, eminent and learned men. However, I would not want my silence to give a false impression of the amount of praise and honour due to these men, who exerted themselves

with the utmost zeal in managing University business, warding off dangers, and in furthering the good and just government of the University. As far as I am concerned without their help and counsel I would have been completely unequal to the task in hand—I would, as it were, have been a nonentity. I give undying thanks to them all alike and whatever activities I may have accomplished which would appear to those who are innocent of evil practices as energetic and prudent I gladly and rightly acknowledge that I owe all these to them.

Nor should I mention without grateful record those among the proctors whom I have had as associates during my term of office which is now over.⁷ Indeed, I would venture to swear that they never found and perhaps never will encounter anyone more ready to give them the utmost thanks. I myself would be complaining of the injustices I incurred at the hands of men spurred on by envy and spite, and others carried away by party spirit, deliberately looking for rivalry with me, if I had not decided to forestall all opportunity of verbal strife by my impending retirement from the office which caused them to be consumed with envy. This, however, I shall say, for it must be said; if I had not determined, in what I hope was a Christian spirit, to keep secret some matters which I could with full justice have openly scorned and avenged myself on, and to keep dark the wrongs and slander issuing from those whose friendship I never needed, it may be that they who are deserving of another fate, would not be enjoying such peace and general quiet. Be silent, gentlemen: what some called a lordly rule I expected and experienced to be a harsh state of slavery and a task filled with dangers and risks; so that without the support of your sincerity, loyalty and wisdom, and but for my zeal for those things which benefit the University, I would never have sustained that task which I am unequal to shouldering; nay, I did not energetically strive to escape or avoid being chained any longer to this fateful 'Caucasus of cares'⁸ not because I myself wanted to have supreme control but because I was compelled to obey the commands of others. Yet after experience of many other aspects of life—and those of various types, religious and civil—this scene of my life also has taken place; in which scene, may my conscience, and God, who is infinitely greater than my conscience, be my witnesses that my intention was not to play up the audience but to serve your interests under the auspices of God. Whether I played my part fittingly, knowledgeably or handsomely, inspiring the audience to stamp their feet in applause, I care as much for the deeds of those who have never been born. What I have

planned or done to the glory of the great and good God, for the safety of my country, for the advantage of the University, this will be of concern to Him, who supports us petty men with His help, instructs us by His grace, protects us with His favour so that He may in His unsearchable wisdom bring to pass all His holy counsels. Now although I firmly deny that I was aware of any wrong committed in keeping the province entrusted to my care, nevertheless I would be most foolish if I thought that I was exempt from all blame and worthy of no censure. For this I earnestly feel triumphant that I have been given my discharge not as an old man with one foot in the grave—a dry-bones; also because at least I do not appear to have played out the last act of my life among those concerned with the affairs of the world and with public business. That in my forty-second year I have held not the lowest position in the camp, in the senate and in the University—indeed I hold the highest office that a man of my lot and position can attain in our Commonwealth—and in all things I have conducted myself in such a manner that I am not ashamed or sorry for any of my actions; all this is to be attributed to divine grace and mercy. For

Whatever I am,

Although below the riches and ability of Lucilius,
Envy will unwillingly confess

That I have lived constantly among the great.⁹

As long as life is given me, the sweet memory of my past life will be a great relief from cares; for to have been approved by men who have won the approval of us all and of the people—this I consider to be of some distinction. For just as, for the period of some years, it fell to my lot to have contact and do business with men who were by far supreme in arms and counsel in our country and with that famous figure whom we know as the greatest, wisest and bravest man who ever lived: so also it was granted me to enter into the closest ties of friendship in this University with many of the dictators in the world of letters. Every kind of man has something to admire; every kind of man has also something to cause deserved displeasure: the man about whom we can speak nothing but words of praise does not exist: neither does he who ought to be despised on all accounts. We are men: only he, who feels that wisdom and godliness were born and will die with himself and the champions of the factions he earnestly supports, deserves to be considered to be beneath all other men.

Now farewell, gentlemen, now that: . . . people have matriculated; . . . admitted to the doctorate; . . . to the degree

of Master; . . . to the degree of Bachelor;¹⁰ Professors' salaries, lost for many years, have been maintained and paid; many offices, by no means negligible ones, sustained; the rights and privileges of the University have been defended against some efforts of its enemies; the treasury is tenfold increased; many of every rank in the University have been promoted to various honours and benefices; new exercises have been introduced and established; old ones have been duly performed; reformation of manners has been diligently undertaken in spite of the grumbling of certain profligate brawlers; labours have been numberless; besides submitting to the most enormous expense, often when brought to the brink of death on your account, I have hated the feeble powers of my body, nearly incapable of keeping pace with my designs: the reproaches of the vulgar have been disregarded, the envy of others has been overcome: in these circumstances I wish you all prosperity and bid you farewell. I congratulate myself on a successor who can relieve me of this burden: and you on one who is able completely to repair any injury which your affairs may have suffered through our inattention.

Now, most learned man, I, together with this whole assembly in convocation, congratulate you on this office which you have not attained by your own efforts or desires. Think of whichever predecessor except me you wish—the virtue of one, the learning of another, the charm of a third and my five years of office (as I have nothing greater to offer)—all these graces I sincerely wish upon you. Continue in your life of virtue, most distinguished man, and may the University flourish under your rule. All the rest will be a light burden if you, who excel in other arts, are not soft in the suffering of unpopularity. The lot of virtue put on spectacle is hard: great things are expected; scarcely are they pleasing to those who are ignorant of them and whose minds are dulled. Flies and wasps strive to mar even the most wonderful odours. There has been no-one of outstanding virtue and learning who has not met with immediate envy. But not knowing where the course of my speech was leading me I have taken care to break off here. I am returning to my old work, my well-known vigils, my long-delayed studies: as for you, gentlemen, long may you live and fare you well.

NOTES

- 1 This was delivered in Convocation on 9th October, 1657.
- 2 The way in which Owen speaks here suggests that he was not removed from office to make way for a presbyterian divine (as has often been suggested) but rather that he had

- asked Richard Cromwell, the new Chancellor, to release him from the office.
- 3 The new Vice-Chancellor was John Conant, Rector of Exeter College.
 - 4 Owen was often sick but he survived until 1683.
 - 5 Owen refers to the deliberations of the Barebones Parliament during its last few days of existence when the abolition of the tithe system and the Universities seemed a real possibility.
 - 6 Virgil, *Aeneid*, I, 205ff.
 - 7 The Proctors over the five years included Francis Howell, Peter Jersey, Seth Ward, Robert Georges, Thomas Cracroft, Stephen Charnock, Samuel Bruen, Edward Wood, Richard Franklyn, William Carpenter, Samuel Byfield, and Samuel Conant. Cf. *Alumni Oxonienses*.
 - 8 Cf. First Oration, note 11.
 - 9 Horace, *Satires*, II i, 74ff.
 - 10 These figures were obviously not in the MSS which were used when the Orations were first printed in 1721. They could be supplied by a careful study of the materials available in the University Archives but I have not had time to do this. The figures were obviously as good as or even better than the figures for the 1630's or else there would have not been much point in mentioning them.

(The *Oxford Orations of John Owen* is available from Peter Toon, Edge Hill College, Ormskirk, Lancs., for 60p.)